

## Message Text

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71-61

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OPR-02 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05

/063 W

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R 161052Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3461

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10055

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: THE PX CAPER OF APRIL 8

SUMMARY: ON APRIL 16 THE POLICE ARRESTED POLICE DEPUTY SPECIAL BRANCH COMMANDER (SUSPECTED OF COMPLICITY WITH U.S. PX HIJACKING RING) AT HIS HOME. POLICE SEIZED 5 MILLION BAHT OF HIJACKED U.S. PX GOODS ON APRIL 8. ASSISTANT POLICE DIRECTOR GENERAL INDIRECTLY IMPLICATED. END OF SUMMARY.

1. POLICE ARRESTED COL. THIPCHAROEN CHUWET, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH, AT HIS HOME ON APRIL 16. THIPCHAROEN ALLEGEDLY IS INVOLVED IN A PX GOODS HIJACKING RING AND HAD BEEN SOUGHT BY THE POLICE SINCE APRIL 8. HE HAS REFUSED TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO THE POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL SISUK MAHINTARATHEP OR TO HIS DEPUTY, LTG MONTCHAI PHANKONGCHUAN, WHO WAS APPOINTED TO OVERSEE THE INVESTIGATION. HE IS PRESENTLY BEING HELD IN CUSTODY WITHOUT BAIL.

2. FOR THE PAST WEEK BANGKOK PRESS HAS CARRIED A SERIES  
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OF ARTICLES ON THEFT OF U.S. PX GOODS. ARTICLES ALLEGED

COL. THIPCHAROEN DEEPLY INVOLVED. THIPCHAROEN WAS BEING SOUGHT FOR HIS COMPLICITY IN A PX GOODS HIJACKING RING. THE CRIME SUPPRESSION DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE SEIZED 5 MILLION BAHT WORTH OF PX GOODS IN A FACTORY ON APRIL 8. AT THAT TIME THEY ARRESTED 15 WHO WERE PARTICIPATING IN THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF THE GOODS BUT ALLOWED THIPCHAROEN TO LEAVE THE FACTORY WITH TWO OTHER MEN SUSPECTED OF BEING LEADERS OF THE HIJACKING RING. THE IDENTITY AND WHEREABOUTS OF THE TWO OTHER MEN ARE STILL UNKNOWN.

3. THIS CASE HAS GAINED WIDE PUBLICITY FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, THE RANK AND POSITION OF THE FUGITIVE COLONEL. SECOND, THE REPORT THAT THE TWO POLICE COLONELS AND THE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN CHARGE OF THE RAID ALLOWED THIPCHAROEN AND THE TWO SUSPECTED LEADERS TO LEAVE THE FACTORY PREMISES WHEN THE STOLEN GOODS WERE SEIZED BY POLICE. THIRD, BECAUSE AN ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF APPEARS INDIRECTLY IMPLICATED.

4. THE NAME OF ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF POL. LTG KRIT PATCHIMSAWAT HAS BEEN LINKED TO THIS CASE THROUGH HIS YOUNGER SISTER, PRA-ON PATCHIMSAWAT, WHOSE MERCEDES BENZ WAS USED TO TRANSPORT COL. THIPCHAROEN AND THE TWO OTHERS FROM THE FACTORY. ANY EYEWITNESS, WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE FACTORY ON APRIL 8, HAS TESTIFIED THAT HE SAW MISS PRA-ON THERE WITH COL. THIPCHAROEN AND THE SUSPECTED LEADERS SHORTLY BEFORE THEY LEFT THE PREMISES.

5. THE PX GOODS WERE BEING HIJACKED FROM AREAS AT KLONG TOEY GUARDED BY TIRAPAT GUARDS CO., UNDER CONTRACT TO JUSMAG. THE GOODS INCLUDED SUNDRY DRUGSTORE ITEMS, MEN'S UNDERWEAR, JEANS AND SUCH ITEMS AS BLACK AND WHITE TV SETS, CIGARETTES AND CASSETTE TAPES. THE WHOLESALE PX PRICE OF THE GOODS IS ABOUT \$73,000 US OF WHICH ALL BUT \$3,300 US WORTH HAS BEEN RECOVERED.

6. COMMENT: POL. GENERAL SISUK MAHINTHARATHEP HAS TAKEN STRONG ACTION IN THIS CASE OF CORRUPTION INVOLVING COLLUSION BETWEEN EMPLOYEES OF THE TRANSPORT COMPANY ETO, THE PORT AUTHORITIES, AND POLICEMEN. HE SET UP A SPECIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE HEADED BY CENTRAL INVESTIGATION DEPUTY COMMISSIONER POL. MAJ. GEN. KITTI SERBUT AND APPOINTED DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, MONTHCAI PANKONGHCUAN TO OVERSEE THE CASE. THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF SOUND AND FURY TO DATE BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE "BIG BOYS" ARE EVENTUALLY CAUGHT, TRIED AND CONVICTED.  
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARRESTS, POLICE FORCES, INVESTIGATIONS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ullricre  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, TH, (THIPCHARUEN CHUWET)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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